

And after we won that war, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally and worked to build a democracy in Japan. Now, there was a lot of skeptics. You can understand why. Why should we help an enemy? A lot of people's lives were turned upside down as a result of that war with the Japanese, and they weren't interested at all about helping the Japanese. I'm sure there were skeptics saying the enemy couldn't conceivably become a democracy—a lot of doubters. There was also people in this country had faith in the ability of liberty to transform societies. As a result of that faith, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about how to keep the peace that we all want.

Think about that. Think about what liberty can do to a society. And that's what I want the young to understand, what's taking place in the world today. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly-elected leader from Iraq, talking about the peace in the broader Middle East. And our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe everybody yearns to be free. I believe people in the broader Middle East want to be free. I believe that because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

So I've come to your good city to ask for the vote and ask for your help. I know why I'm running again. I want to extend prosperity and hope to every corner of the country. I want to promote an ownership society where more and more citizens from all walks of life can say, "I own my home. I own my business." I want people to be able to realize a great tomorrow by making sure this country is safe and secure from an enemy. I know where I want to take us. We've done the hard work together over 3¾ years. We've climbed the mountain, and now we can see the valley below, a valley which is hopeful and prosperous and peaceful. And with your help, we will get there together.

God bless. Thank you for coming. I appreciate you being here. Thank you all. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. at Richland Center High School. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Rita Kidd of Richland Center, WI; Dale Schultz, candidate for Congress in Wisconsin's Third Congressional District, and his wife, Rachel, district administrator, Richland School District; John Cler, principal, Richland Center High School; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Cuba City, Wisconsin

October 26, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I am honored you're here. Thanks for coming today. You know, Cuba City is known as the City of the Presidents. Kind of makes sense that a President stops in to say hello, doesn't it? A few months ago, I was the first sitting President to pass through Cuba City. Today I'm the first sitting President to stop in and give a speech. And I'm looking forward to signing my name to the shield of the 43d President.

As I'm traveling your beautiful State asking for the vote and I'm asking for your help, I'd like to encourage you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. We have a duty in this democracy to vote. We have an obligation. When you get them headed to the polls, don't overlook discerning Democrats—[laughter]—people like Zell Miller, the Senator from Georgia who is strongly for my candidacy. Remind people if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Listen, I'm going to give you—I've been traveling Wisconsin a lot, giving people reasons to put me back into office. But perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [Laughter] I said, "Fine, you know, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the deal. [Laughter] She is giving a lot of speeches. And when she does, the American people see what I know, that she is compassionate; she is warm; she is a strong, great First Lady.

I asked Tommy to take on a tough job in Washington, DC, and he's done a heck of a job. I'm proud of Tommy Thompson. My only problem with being around Tommy, all he wants to do is talk about Wisconsin football. And of course he did have to bring up the Packers-Cowboy game as well, played right there at Lambeau Field. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Steve Freese for his introduction. I appreciate his service to your community in the statehouse. I want to thank my friend Mark Green, Congressman Mark Green, who's traveling with us. Thanks for coming, Mark.

I want to thank the mayor, Dick Davis. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for being here. It's kind for you to come. I want to thank the members of the City of Presidents Committee—right there. Thank you all.

I'm traveling with a fine man and his wife, Tim and Barbara Michels. He is going to make a great United States Senator. I appreciate him coming. And I want to thank my friend Dale Schultz, who will also make a great Congressman in the Third Congressional District.

I want to thank Sam McGrew, the superintendent of schools. Appreciate you being here, Mr. Superintendent. I want to remind you, Mr. Superintendent, when it came time to pick a Secretary of Education, I picked a superintendent of schools. And the reason why I did is because I understand local control of schools is important, and I understand a superintendent of a school district understands education firsthand. And I appreciate your service.

And I want to thank Tim Hazen, the principal of the Cuba City High School. Thank you, sir. *[Applause]* That's a good sign, when the students are cheering for you. *[Laughter]* I want to thank the—Danielle Wallenhorst, the student council president. Madam President, thank you for greeting me. Oh, there she is. Yes, there she is, good. Listen, I understand the football team has got a game tonight. I wish you all the best. Good luck to you. And as Tommy pointed out, the volleyball team here is really good too. I appreciate you being here.

Listen, thanks for coming. We're coming down the stretch in this campaign. And there are different candidates running with dif-

ferent points of view. You know where I stand, and sometimes, you even know where my opponent stands. *[Laughter]*

Now, we both have records. I'm running on mine. He's running from his, and there's a reason why. There is a mainstream in American politics. The fellow I'm running against sits on the far left bank. I'm a compassionate conservative and proudly so.

I have a positive and optimistic vision for our future, a comprehensive strategy for victory in Iraq and for victory in the wider war against terror, a plan to make sure our economy continues to grow so that hope spreads its wings in every corner of America. My opponent has no plan, no vision, just a long list of complaints. But a Monday morning quarterback has never led any team to victory.

This election comes down to five clear choices for your families, for America's families: your family's security; your family budget; your quality of life; your retirement; and the bedrock values that makes this a great country.

The first clear choice is the most important one because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats. The terrorists who killed thousands of innocent people are still dangerous, and they're determined. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war on terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, this world of ours will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen on my watch.

Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened the protections of our homeland. We're reforming our intelligence capabilities. We're transforming our military. There will be no draft. The All-Volunteer Army will remain the All-Volunteer Army. We are relentless. We are determined. We're staying on the offensive. We're defeating the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them here in our own country. And we're making progress. More than three-quarters of Al

Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them can be certain of this: We're on their trail.

A President has to lead with consistency and strength. In war, your tactics change but never your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you don't agree with me, you know what I believe, where I stand, and what I intend to do. On the good days and on the bad days, when the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to win this war on terror, and I will always support the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform.

My opponent in this campaign has taken a different approach. It's fair to say that consistency has not been his strong point. [Laughter] Senator Kerry says we're better off with Saddam Hussein out of power, except when he declares that removing Saddam makes us less safe. In our second debate, he said he always believed that Saddam was a threat, except a few questions later when he said Saddam was not a threat. [Laughter] He says he was right when he voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein, but that I was wrong to use force against Saddam Hussein. [Laughter]

Now he's saying he knew where bin Laden was in the fall of 2001 and that our military passed up a chance to get him at Tora Bora. Let me talk about that for a minute. That's unjustified criticism of our military commanders in the field. This is the worst kind of Monday morning quarterbacking. In fact, our commander in Afghanistan, General Tommy Franks, recently wrote this about Tora Bora: "The Senator's understanding of events does not square with reality." The general says that American Special Forces were actively involved in the search for the terrorists in Tora Bora, and the intelligence reports at the time placed bin Laden in any of several countries.

Before Senator Kerry got into political difficulty and revised his views, he saw our actions in Tora Bora differently. In the fall of 2001, on national TV, he said this about Tora Bora: "I think we have been doing this pretty effectively, and we should continue to do it that way." At the time, the Senator said this about Tora Bora: "I think we've been smart. I think the administration leadership has

done it well, and we are on the right track." All I can say to that is, I am George W. Bush, and I approve of that message. [Laughter]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I want to thank those who wear the Nation's uniform that have joined us today. I appreciate your service. I want to thank the veterans who are here, who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. And I want to thank the military families who are with us today as well.

And I made a pledge to our troops and their families that they would have all they need to do their jobs and to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress and proposed \$87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way. It was necessary funding. It was really important and so important that we got great bipartisan support for the vote—on the vote to fund the money. As a matter of fact, it was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it. As you're out rounding up the vote, I want you to remind the people of this important part of the State of this startling statistic: 4 Members of the United States Senate, 4 out of 100, voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against supporting our troops in harm's way—only 4, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They asked him, they said, "Well, how could you have made that vote?" And he said perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign—[laughter]—"I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." [Laughter] Now, look, I didn't spend any time in the coffee shops around Cuba City, but I suspect you're not going to find many people who talk that way here. [Laughter]

He's given several explanations—you can't be calibrating the polls when it comes time to be supporting our troops. They said, well, when did he start changing his mind? Well, he started changing his mind about his position when it looked like he was losing to Howard Dean in the Democrat primary, right about the time this vote came up. See, earlier on TV, prior to the vote, he said it would be irresponsible not to support our

troops in combat. And sure enough, he took a look at the polls and decided not to support our troops in combat. A President must be consistent. A President must be willing to stand for what he believes.

In the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge—now remember, my opponent opposed President Ronald Reagan's doctrine of peace through strength. He didn't support removing Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, even though the international community united in concert. In moments of challenge and decision, he has chosen the path of weakness and inaction. Now, look, his record not only stands in opposition to me but in opposition to the great tradition of the Democrat Party of America. The party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of crisis. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay any price" and "bear any burden," and he has replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run."

Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. Today I want to speak to every one of them: If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I'd be honored to have your support, and I'm asking for your vote.

We have big differences—we have differences in this campaign about how to keep you secure, and the differences are clear. Senator Kerry says that September the 11th did not change him much at all. Those are his words. And the policies make it clear. He said that the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. Well, I want to tell you something. My outlook changed on September the 11th. I understand the stakes. I understand the consequences of inaction. I understand the consequence of sending mixed signals.

I remember standing in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I will never forget. I will never forget the sights and the sounds. I will never forget the hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the guy looking at me straight in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning try-

ing to figure out how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending our security, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice involves your budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families, and I kept my word. And remember what we have been through as an economy. Six months prior to my arrival, the stock market was in serious decline. And then we had a recession and corporate scandals and the attack on America, which cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But we acted. I led the Congress to reduce your taxes, and our economic policies have led us back to growth. Think about these statistics and remind your friends and neighbors about these statistics. We've created 1.9 million jobs in the last 13 months. Farm incomes are up all across America. The farmers are making a good living. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. Small businesses are flourishing. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in Wisconsin is 5 percent.

And one of the reasons Wisconsin is doing so well is because your small businesses are flourishing and because the farmers are making a living. In 4 years, we'll—the next 4 years, we'll continue to help our dairy farmers. I support the MILC program to help the dairy farmers here in Wisconsin. We will make sure—we'll continue to open up markets for Wisconsin's farmers. I understand a good farm economy is necessary for a good national economy.

Look, we have a different point of view when it comes to taxes. My opponent has a different economic plan. It starts with the fact that he said he's going to raise taxes. And that's a promise most politicians keep. *[Laughter]* He's promised to spend \$2.2 trillion in new money—spending. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. *[Laughter]* And they asked him, "How you going to pay for all that new spending?" And he said, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich." You've heard that

before, haven't you? See, there's a difference between what he's promised and how much he can raise. He's promised 2.2 trillion, but by running up the top two brackets, he only raises about 600 to 800 billion dollars. There's a gap. Guess who usually fills the gap? The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you because we're going to carry Wisconsin and win a great victory on November the 2d.

A third issue about the quality of our families and the life of our families is education and health care. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to end the soft bigotry of low expectations in our schools. And I kept my word. The No Child Left Behind Act is a good, solid piece of legislation. It says in return for extra Federal money, schools must measure to show us whether or not our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. You can't solve a problem until you diagnose the problem. And so by measuring early, we're correcting problems before they become too acute, before it is too late. And an achievement gap in America is closing all over America. People are learning to read and write and add and subtract, and we're not going to go back to the old days of mediocrity and low expectations in our schoolhouses.

And I've got a commonsense way to help on health care. Most of the uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses ought to be allowed to pool together to extend risk so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies get to do. I believe we ought to expand health savings accounts, low-premium, high-deductible, tax-free policies that enable people to manage and control their own health care. I know we're going to help the poor and the needy through community health centers and rural health centers. We're going to help sign up people for our low-income children's programs.

But also to make sure health care is available and affordable to you, we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up the cost of medicine. I've met too many ob-gyns around our country that are quitting the practice of medicine because these lawsuits are running their premiums up too high on their insurance policy. They just

can't practice. I met too many women who are wondering whether or not they're going to get the quality health care for themselves and their baby because ob-gyns are being run out of practice. This isn't right for America. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You've got to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors and the patients and the hospitals and the small-business owners. I am for medical liability reform—now.

You know, in one of our debates, my opponent looked right in the camera and said his health care plan—about his health care plan, “The Federal Government has nothing to do with it.” You know, I could barely contain myself. *[Laughter]* See, I understand his plan. The Federal Government has got a lot to do with it. Eight out of ten people will be signed up on a Federal program. When you make it easier to get on Medicaid, small businesses will drop insurance for their employees because the Government will pay for it, and that will cause about 7 or 8 million people to get on Medicaid. And when the Government starts writing the checks, the Government starts writing the rules. And then when the Government starts writing the rules, the Government starts making decisions for you. They start rationing health care. They decide what doctor you can go see. To me, that is the wrong prescription for health care in America.

Here's what I believe. I believe when it comes to health care, the decisions ought to be between patients and doctors, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to our seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drugs. I kept my word. And I want to thank Tommy Thompson for his help. You know, you've heard this issue debated for years. Matter of fact, it became such a political hot potato they called Medicare,

“Mediscare.” But Tommy and I ignored all that, and we decided to do what was right for our seniors. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicines with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting \$600 this year to help them on their cards and \$600 next year. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

Let me talk about Social Security. You all might remember the 2000 campaign here in Wisconsin, the ads that said, “If George W. gets elected, our seniors are not going to get their checks.” That’s the old-style scare tactics. When you’re out there talking to your friends and neighbors, remind them, George W. did get elected, and our seniors got their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me, we’re in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. When the baby boomers retire, it’s going to be hard for the next generation to support us and then have a retirement system for their own. That’s why we need a President to think differently about Social Security. I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account, an account that earns better interest, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

You know, we have a difference of opinion on Social Security. My opponent said he’s going to protect Social Security, but what he forgot to tell you is he’s voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits. That’s part of that record. See, that’s just—see, he doesn’t want you to know the record. He can run, but he cannot hide. That’s what I say. He can run from it, but he can’t hide from it.

And then he said, when it comes to Social Security, things are okay for the next generation. I think the job of a President^{*} is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. You’ve got to expect from your President somebody who is willing to take on the tough

issue, not have their finger stuck in the wind trying to figure out which way the winds are blowing but somebody who is going to do what is right. And what is right is to protect Social Security for our seniors and make it viable for the younger citizens of this country.

And finally, the final clear choice in this election is on the values that are crucial to keeping our families strong. And here my opponent and I are miles apart. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I believe marriage is a sacred commitment, a pillar of our civilization. I don’t believe this is a partisan issue. As a matter of fact, when Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as the union between a man and a woman, the vast majority of Democrats supported it, and President Bill Clinton signed it into law. But Senator Kerry was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Listen, reasonable people can find common ground on the most difficult of issues. Republicans and Democrats came together and agreed we should ban the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. I proudly signed that bill. But my opponent was part of an out-of-the-mainstream minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. See, we just have a difference of opinion, a big difference of opinion. I’ll continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

My opponent said the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood. [*Laughter*] Most American families don’t look to Hollywood as a source of values. [*Laughter*] The heart and soul of America is found in communities like Cuba City, Wisconsin.

You know, one of my favorite quotes that I hope tells you what I believe and how I lead is by a fellow Texan named Tom Lea, and here’s what he said. He said, “Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that has gone.” That’s how

^{*} White House correction.

I feel about this country, optimistic and hopeful. I know we can achieve anything we set our mind to. You know, in the last 4—nearly 4 years, we've come through a lot together. Because we've done the hard work of climbing the mountain, we see the valley below. And that valley is a valley full of prosperity and hope, a valley where people in this country feel comfortable about owning something, a valley where the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, where our families are strong. We're going to continue to spread freedom and liberty so we can achieve the peace that we all want for generations to come.

Four years ago, when I traveled your State asking for the vote, I made you this pledge: I said I would restore the integrity to the Oval Office. With your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. I appreciate it. Now I'm going to sign this shield.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. at Cuba City High School. In his remarks, he referred to Wisconsin State Representative Stephen J. Freese; Mayor Richard Davis of Cuba City, WI; Samuel McGrew, district administrator, School District of Cuba City; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Dubuque, Iowa

October 26, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Listen, Laura and I are glad to be back in Dubuque and so honored so many came out to say hello. You lift our spirits. Really appreciate you coming. We're here, of course, asking for the vote and asking for your help. We need you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls, find our fellow Republicans, find independents, find discerning Democrats and remind them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

When I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, so long as you make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Promise me

I'll never have to give a political speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she is not holding me to that promise. She's giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a compassionate, strong, great First Lady.

And I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's doing a wonderful job. You know, I admit it, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [Laughter] You'll be happy to hear I didn't pick him because of his hairdo; I picked him because of his experience, his judgment, his ability to get the job done.

I'm proud to be on the stage with Congressman Jim Nussle, and I want to thank his wife, Karen, for being here. He's the chairman of the Budget Committee. He's watching your money like a hawk—eye. Nussle is a good man, good, solid citizen from the State of Iowa and I'm proud to call him friend.

You know, we love your Senator, Chuck Grassley. I saw him the other day, and I said, "Say, Chuck, you know, the South Lawn has got a lot of grass"—[laughter]—"and we're looking for somebody to give us a hand." [Laughter] He's done a wonderful job as the chairman of the Finance Committee. I know the people of Iowa are proud that he's the Senator; I know you're going to put him back into office for 6 more years.

I want to thank Dale Schultz for coming. Dale is right there. He's from the Third Congressional District in the great State of Wisconsin. He's been traveling with me all day. Just in case anybody from Wisconsin is watching on TV, put this good man in as a Congressman.

I want to thank Dave Vaudt for being here. I want to thank Dave Roederer. I want to thank Doug Gross. I want to thank the Wil Gravatt Band for entertaining you all. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, the people putting up all the signs and making the phone calls and helping turn out people to rallies in the Dubuque area. With your help, there is no doubt in my mind we're going to carry Iowa and win a great victory in November.

We have just one week to go. Voters have a clear choice between two very different candidates with dramatically different approaches and records. Now, you know where